

Michael Westling

#299651 | May 11, 2021

Testimony to **Portland City Council** on the **Design Overlay Zone Amendments, Recommended Draft**

I am writing to support the Design Overlay Zone Amendments as an urgent and important tool to support housing affordability in Portland and promote high standards for architectural design with objective design standards that apply in most situations outside the central city. Portland continues to become an increasingly expensive place to live, limiting the diversity and creativity that makes our city a great place to live. If we allow personal preferences to define the future of our city's architecture, or worse, allow for individuals or neighborhood groups to oppose new housing under the guise of taste or character, we'll all be worse off for it. I encourage council to improve DOZA by expanding Type II review option to include: - All regulated affordable housing projects certified by the Housing Bureau, not just projects receiving city funding. - All buildings up to 75' that are using the Inclusionary Housing height bonus. This will create more affordable housing than requiring the time-consuming Type III review. DOZA can also be improved by ensuring the Design Commission is always informed by affordability by requiring one member with experience living in, designing, or developing affordable housing, and by NOT doubling Design Standard points required for buildings between 55-75' tall. City commissioners should also oppose "Main Street" guidelines developed by individual neighborhoods that make it harder to add housing in our highest-opportunity areas and deepen growing disparities in Portland. It absolutely is possible to have clear, objective and flexible design standards that result in excellent new buildings without requiring a potentially slow, costly discretionary process that allows people to veto new development because it doesn't align with their personal preferences for what their neighborhood should look like or who deserves to live there. We have a responsibility to encourage housing options for people of all incomes and backgrounds in neighborhoods that provide access to jobs, schools, parks, and essential services. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this complex issue.

Testimony is presented without formatting.